

Abbotsham News

December 2014

issue jd/04

The newsletter is generously supported by Abbotsham Village Fete

With very best wishes for
a Happy Christmas



and a joyous and
peaceful New Year

Christmas Time Again!



Mini-Santas!

I can't believe that it's almost Christmas again! Huge thanks to everyone who has managed to find time to contribute to this edition of the newsletter, at such a busy time of year. It's fantastic to have some new contributors this issue and lovely to showcase the interests and creativity of members of our village.

Please let me know if you have any articles for the next newsletter, or any ideas for regular features, by **Monday 16 February**.

Do have a Happy Christmas and New Year,

Justine
justine@bluesoupcomms.co.uk, Tel: 422079



2015 will be another **multiple decade birthday celebration** with at least 10 people reaching an '0' birthday. The ones that we know about so far are one person that will be 100, two will be 90, three will be 80, 4 will be 70 and 1 will be 60! This was first started 20 years ago. Sadly, some have passed away but others have now moved into the village.

We have set a date for a decade Celebration Village Tea on 11th July 2015 in the Village hall for everyone in the village who would like to come. This will be a bring & share tea. Details to follow nearer the date.

We are sure there may be others in the village who will be reaching a decade. Do we have any children that will be 10? Can we break a record for the most decade birthdays in a small village? Please let us know if you would like your name on the birthday cake! We would love to include you.

Contact Gill Marlow (474814 or e mail pandgmarlow@btinternet.com) or Joy Shore (475552)

Diary of Events

A monthly diary of events is circulated by e-mail covering events in the village. The same circulation list is used for one off notices such as the recent Open Meeting on the DCC cuts programme. If you would like to be added to the circulation list please e-mail Philip Marlow on pandgmarlow@btinternet.com.

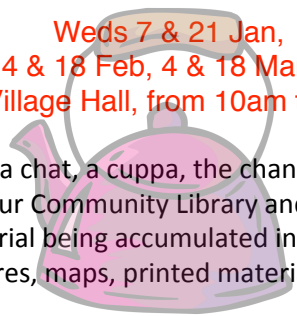
In Memory

Early in September a plaque was unveiled in the village skittle alley to John Hockin, who died on 19th January 2014. He was born at Homewood and was well known in the Village for his involvement in the community and was a leading light of the Abbotsham skittle team for many years.

Community Coffee Mornings!

Weds 7 & 21 Jan,
4 & 18 Feb, 4 & 18 March
in the Village Hall, from 10am to 12 noon

Come along for a chat, a cuppa, the chance to swap books and jigsaws in our Community Library and the opportunity to see the material being accumulated in the local archive of pictures, maps, printed material and personal memories.



Macmillan Christmas Coffee Morning



The Ogles are doing another classic car Cape to Cape supporting Macmillan Cancer Care

David & Margaret warmly invite you to Lower Winsford

on Saturday 13 December, 10.30am-12.30pm

Entrance £5.00 to include coffee, cake and mince pies
Cake Stall - Raffle - Sales Table



Abbotsham Village Fete Jumble Sale

Sat 17 January 2015, 2.00pm- 4.00pm
in the Village Hall

Jumble and Helpers Needed

Please contact Rebecca on 07775 661072

Abbotsham Badminton Club

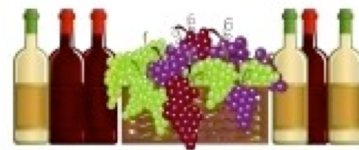
Don't forget that the Badminton Club runs in the School Hall on Thursday evenings during term time. There are two sessions each week - the teenage session runs from 5.45pm until 7.15pm and the adult session runs from 7.15pm to 9.30pm. Members of any standard are welcome for a social evening with exercise thrown in. We also have the use of a table tennis table for those interested in a break from badminton.

Parents of teenagers should contact Gill or Philip Marlow (tel 474814) to confirm details if they have not been before.



For Village Hall bookings please telephone
Irene Ballard on 01237 476455.

Abbotsham Village Hall Trustees invite you to join us for a



Wine Sampling Evening and Supper

on Sat 17 January, 7.15pm for 7.30 pm

brought to us by John Crossman,
Cork-master of Torridge Valley Wine Circle

Fun, informative and informal

Tickets £6.50 (to cover the cost of wine)
with a **Bring and Share supper** (finger food)
and a Raffle towards the Village Hall renovation fund

**Reservations and payment in advance please,
by Fri 9 January**

From: Joyce and Chris Reed
at Highdown, Pump Lane, Abbotsham
By email chris@abbotsham.fsnet.co.uk or
phone evenings 459165

Abbotsham Village Fete Saturday 27 June 2015



The Village Fete committee would like to wish everyone
a Happy Christmas and New Year!

Many thanks again to all that helped make the Village Fete in 2014 such a great success. As ever time moves on and the 2015 Fete is now just 7 months away!! Please feel free to contact John on his email johnagarrett@btinternet.com if you have any ideas for the event and for stalls email Rebecca on rebeccaagarrett@btinternet.com

The mobile library visits the village most fourth
Wednesdays, from 11.05am to 11.30am. It can
be found outside the Old School. The next
dates will be 28 Jan, 25 Feb and 25 March.



Don't forget to have a look at our village website on <http://abbotshamdevon.weebly.com/>

Messy Church Family Activity Church



Family Activity Church takes place at the Village Hall, on the second Sunday of each month, at 10.00am.

It starts with breakfast for all those hungry Dads & Mums and children who've skipped breakfast to be along early! Followed by a time of worship, Bible story and craft activity.

Keep Fit for the Mature

Joan Spear runs Keep Fit for the Mature in the Village Hall from 10.00am to 11.00am on the opposite Wednesdays to the Community Coffee Mornings. Details from Joan on 476607.



Volunteers Needed

Abbotsham Toddler Group meets every Thursday (during term-time) from 9.30-11.00am in the Village Hall.

We are in need of a volunteer/s to help with snack time. If you would be interested in helping out, please call Alice on 07970 424981 or email:

abbotshamtoddlers@yahoo.co.uk



Abbotsham & Alwington Pre-School has settled well into The Old School Rooms and The Major's Office. It is nice to see the buildings being used for education again.

The children are benefitting from the extra space to play, learn and explore. We always welcome volunteers to wash a few paint pots or dishes, and of course this gives you the opportunity to see your village Pre-School in action, so please pop in.

Christmas Show Abbotsham Players



By the time you read this Abbotsham Players will have put on their twenty-fifth full length Christmas Show. 27 years ago a small one night variety show was put on at Christmas at the instigation of Carol Price. The following year this was repeated. It was then decided to try and revive the 1950's tradition of a big Show once a year. Pictures in the Archives show Ruby Beer starring in these Shows. The first show was Sleeping Beauty written and directed by Stuart Wood. In the cast, John Hockin provided a link back to the Concert Parties of the Fifties.

Over the 25yrs somewhere between £15,000 and £20,000 has been raised, split between local and national charities and people have been offered old fashioned family entertainment. It is also a fact that most young people in the village took part in the show at some stage and enjoyed an introduction to performing in public.

Once again this year has seen Frank Starkey write and Joan Spear direct our pantomime and they want to hang up their pen and director's chair respectively. They have followed a long line of writers/directors including Carol Price, Michael Jackman and Jane Bindon and deserve remission for good conduct. The same is true for a number of cast members and helpers. We are lucky to have in the Village a new generation of young people and if they are to enjoy the fun of being in a Christmas Show, we will need some new or returning faces at Abbotsham Players.

An Open Meeting will be called in early February to ascertain who is interested in taking the tradition forward. Please think about it because it would be a shame if we let the Show die for one year, like the Fete, before people recognised that they wanted the Show to go on!

Philip Marlow

From our Parish Church ...

Restoration of Stained Glass Windows



If you go round the Church, past the War Memorial, round the West Wall, you can see the Transept (the bit that juts out to the South, making a Cross with the Tower) and you might remember that for years now one of the windows there was covered with a horrid-looking perspex stuff. When Andrew Johnson, who has been doing work on the windows for us for some time, examined that window, he found that, underneath the Perspex, the window was on the point of falling in – the Perspex having been put there, no doubt, to quell draughts, and to stop westerly gales from blowing it right in. The window had been fitted with a ‘hopper’ – a hinged portion to allow ventilation – and this had all seized long since. As well as removing the Perspex, Mr. Johnson has had all four ‘light’ back to his workshop in Exeter, repaired the leading, had a new ‘hopper’ made, and not merely replaced the repaired windows, but ‘sprung’ the joints of the Mullions (stone

uprights), where the 19th C. iron bars had rusted and pushed the joints apart. So now the four lights of the window in the Transept have stainless steel glazing bars (carefully tied to the glass with copper wire), the holes and gaps remedied, the

stonework re-jointed, and the glass cleaned: all ready to withstand at least another hundred years of North Devon weather.

In a little while, Mr. Johnson will be up to fit the metal stone-guards (they didn’t need them in the Middle Ages or 19th C.) and while they’ll not block the light, they will diffuse it – so, when you’re passing, come in to Church and look at the windows, the light coming through the glass unimpeded.

Fr Francis Otto

The Hands Free Revolution

contributed by Gill Marlow

I am my response to my child’s mismatched outfit and the crumpled report card at the bottom of her backpack.

I am my response to my spouse who returned from the store without toilet paper but remembered the tailgate snacks.

I am my response to my anxious parent who repeats the same worries and insists on giving me coupons I do not need.

I am my response to my co-worker with sad eyes and frequent absences.

I am my response to my 15-minutes-late hairdresser with a sick child.

I am my response to my neighbour with heart-heavy problems and little family support.

I am my response to the irate driver who cut me off and made an obscene gesture in front of my children.

I am my response to the waitress who got my order wrong.

I am my response to myself when I forgot the one thing I most needed to do today.

I am my response to spilled coffee, rain-soaked shoes, and middle-of-the-night throw ups.

My responses are not perfect ... they are not always ideal ... I am human after all.

But if I strive to offer responses underlined with
grace,
understanding,
kindness,
empathy,
and care,
That is something.
That is something.

Because my responses are more than just words.
They represent
who I am,
who I want to be,
and how I will someday be remembered.

Today I will not respond perfectly. I know.
But if strive to communicate with hints of kindness and traces of love,
That will be something
That will be something
That could mean more than words.

Rachel Macy Stafford 2014

Can you think of a time when someone responded to you in your time of despair with unexpected kindness & understanding? For me, it felt like someone tossed me a life jacket while I was drowning. Let us remember to throw someone a lifeline today by underlining our words a little kindness & love.

Home to Roost
Written after watching starlings at
the old Bideford Bridge
18 November 2011

They swoop and swerve and wheel and turn
A great black cloud, against the sky
Approaching fast, flocks large and small
They join and part and join again.

Fifty at first,
Then a hundred
And more are always coming.
The sky still light; they twist, turning as one
Almost gone against the brightness
Slim and silver
Then black again as they swirl around.

They make fantastic shapes, long, thin; short, fat
Late comers constantly joining
From east and west, from north and south
Over the town, along the river
All come to the old bridge.

Just half an hour ago
The sky was empty.
Will they come tonight?

And now they've come
More and more and more
A thousand now and still they swoop
Never to collide.
Who leads? Who follows?
Who gives the signal for the dive to perch?

The seagulls have a purpose too
Flying north to sit out the night
On the safety of the sea.
They head along the river's length,
Over their day of foraging at the county tip.
Disdainfully they head above the swooping, swirling throng
Never diverted from their straight course home.

The starlings swoop and swirl.
How many years have they done this?
Every winter
Gathering for warmth
Roosting in chattering hundreds
Beneath the grey stone arches of Old Bideford Bridge.

The evening light is fading.
Suddenly the momentum changes.
A signal somehow given and fifty, a hundred
Leave the wheeling hordes and dive full speed
To jostle for their chosen space.
Is this the one they had last night?

Nearby, observing this fantastic sight
The noise is almost deafening.
How can such small creatures be so loud
Fighting and squabbling over each ledge
To find their own small roosting spot?

Another flight, another hundred, two
The next arch now is full
The upper swirl goes on but fewer now
And gradually the sky begins to clear
Each wave plunges headlong down to fill another space.

It is as if each knows his spot
And waits for his allotted time
Reluctant for this fantastic dance to end.

The sky is empty now, gone the straggling seagulls
And gone the myriad starlings, home to roost
But yet it is not quiet
The chattering goes on and on
Until as darkness falls at last
All is quiet and still.

Nothing will disturb the flock
Until the rising sun begins
To warm the old stone walls again
Except
On New Year's Eve
When all the town and county comes
Drinking, chattering, laughing, singing 'til,
On the stroke of midnight
Bangs, bright lights and shouts and screams
The starlings rise in startled flight, silhouetted against the firework glow
Confused
Going they know not where
Adding their frightened cries to the drunken merriment below.

But this too will pass.
The revellers drift home to sleep
The broken glass is cleared away
The birds return
As they will return again
Tomorrow and tomorrow
Until the end of time
A priceless spectacle of beauty
Free for everyone
If only they will pause a while
And lifting faces skyward
Look to see.

by Jenny Jones





Well, here we are again and as you can see the archive has a brand new logo with appropriately rural colours. The archive has a wealth of material about the parish and adjacent areas which is gradually being sorted, indexed and processed into different formats for various uses. One of these uses is our own Abbotsham website <http://abbotshamdevon.weebly.com/> where there is a section devoted to material from the archive. Each of the Archive subsections contains a rough list of the material held followed by images of some of the material itself. Of the items already available here are information on the village smithy including a link to a video clip showing the 4-year old son of the smith shoeing a pony. There is another video clip in the item about Abbotsham racecourse showing a raceday including the first woman to hold a jockey's license. This is where the website becomes a valuable showcase for Abbotsham material, as the video clips would not normally be available within the static archive. You will also find some material on the Bideford, Westward Ho! And Appledore railway which incredibly had two stations in the parish and a third on the parish border. Under St Helen's Church you can find a brief history of the links to Tavistock Abbey; Village Life has some photographs of village fetes, plays and pantomimes down the years. St Helen's School is the most developed of the archive areas where there are photographs, school reports and a transcript of the admissions register starting from 1894 which is an ongoing project but is already up to 1919. Projects currently being worked on for inclusion in the website soon are the histories of the Village Post Office and the two village pubs, with other projects waiting in the wings.

Speaking of projects, the Website is only one of several areas the Archive is working on. There will soon be a permanent display area in the Village Hall showing some of the archive material. This will use the refurbished display board just inside the main door and the first subject is likely to be the Village oak tree (or rather trees!) for which the archive has several historic photographs.

Another major project is the detailed recording of all the grave markers and memorials in St Helen's Church and Churchyard. This is being compiled from careful ground recording and incorporates correlated material from other sources so that it is more than just a list of names. Although there have been attempts to record some of the gravestones and memorials in the past, these have been inaccurate in very many cases, so it pays to be wary when accessing generic websites for instance. A number of footstones have been recovered from a refuse heap in one corner of the churchyard and these are now lined up against the wall next to the old schoolyard. Although containing only initials and (mostly) a year, almost every one has been positively identified.

The research into Abbotsham's WW1 casualties came out of this memorial project, and although much is now known about these men, research continues. Another research project is trying to discover more about all the men listed in the WW1 commemorative scroll which hangs in the Village Hall. In all there are 89 including the 13 fatalities. Once again multiple sources are being used, but if anyone reading this can supply information the Archive would be very grateful.

Of the other areas of research perhaps I will just mention one – that of the 'poor'. The building which is now known as the Old School was once the site of the Parish Poor House. As a result of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, 'unions' were formed and 'workhouses' built which took over from smaller parochial poor houses. Bideford Union Workhouse, the prison-like building which still stands in Meddon Street, took in Abbotsham's poor. Existing workhouse records list some inmates as coming from Abbotsham. In addition some St Helen's burial records from the early 19th C list the deceased as from the Poor House. A lot of work needs to be done to further identify these poor souls but eventually we may know more about this neglected facet of Abbotsham's past.

Martin Wilson, Abbotsham Community Archive
tel: 420946

Stevenstone Hunt

In recognition of Margaret Ogle's special birthday the Stevenstone Hunt had a Lawn Meet at the Thatched Inn on Sat 22 November. It is believed that the last time the Hunt met in the centre of the village was sixty years ago and there are pictures in the archives of the Hunt outside the Old School, with some present villagers as small children admiring the horses. Saturday 22nd was a perfect day, blue sky, sunshine, horses and riders looking their best and an impeccably behaved pack of hounds. Les and the staff at the pub made everyone feel welcome. All in all, it was a perfect memory and a wonderful link with the past.



Philip Marlow

My Favourite Films

by Annie Hill

A little article in the last Abbotsham News got me thinking. What are my favourite five films? My! It was really hard as there are **so** many. In the end I had to put in some categories and pick my favourites from them. Still not easy! I chose five categories - Musicals, Action/Thrillers, Rom Coms, Animated and Black & White.

Musicals

So many were in the running - *The Wizard of Oz*, *Grease*, *Top Hat*, *The Sound of Music* (that came a close second), but the honour went to *Calamity Jane* with the glorious Doris Day at her best and one of the last films I watched with my lovely Uncle David.

Action/Thrillers

Again, hard to choose, Bond, Hitchcock, *Top Gun*, *Under Siege*, *Speed* ... However, Bruce Willis is a real hit for me and any of the *Die Hard* films could have come first. In the end I chose *Die Hard 4.0* as it has always bothered me as to what would happen if all the computers were to fail - worth a watch!!

Romantic Comedies

Again, many to choose from like *Bridget Jones' Diary* (although I much preferred the book), *Love Actually*, *Sleepless in Seattle* with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan ... a very close second. However, I had to go for the wonderful *Four Weddings and a Funeral* as it brings to mind many cringe worthy moments of my own experiences as a 'single' at all my friends' weddings!

Animated

A very hard category as I love them all for different reasons. I'm not a great fan of the latest ones with the exception of *Shrek* which is fabulous! *Dumbo* with its simple drawings, *Jungle Book* for the wonderful colours and animal movements. In the end I've gone for *The Aristocats* - I remember going to the pictures at the Strand with Mum and my brother - LOVE IT!

Black and White

There's something about a black and white! I'm sure someone can tell my why. I LOVE them. The classics like *Casablanca* and *Brief Encounter*, *Strangers on a Train*, some of the Ealing Comedies like *The Lavender Hill Mob*, the Fred Astaire musicals like *Top Hat* and the literary *Great Expectations* with John Mills. But there was only ever one for me in this category - My absolute favourite film of all time is *It's a Wonderful Life* with the fabulous James Stewart. If I ever feel "what's the point?" this film reminds me that no matter how big or small we are, all our actions affect others and their lives would be different if we weren't here!

For the younger members of our village ..

What goes red, white, red, white, red, white?
Santa Claus rolling down a hill!

What did Mrs Claus say to Santa when she looked up to the sky?
Looks like rain, dear!

What do elves learn in school?
The elf-abet!

Why was Cinderella such a poor football player?
Because she kept running away from the ball!

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?
Tinselitus!



Wordsearch by Callum Duhig

R	A	V	W	J	A	B	C	T	F	I	G
B	E	U	P	S	R	D	R	E	H	G	I
X	K	C	T	R	K	E	J	H	S	V	B
Z	A	Y	E	L	E	N	O	Q	T	W	C
C	R	B	C	I	M	S	A	N	T	A	D
D	U	E	F	G	V	D	E	Q	O	X	E
H	D	I	L	J	V	E	N	N	Y	Y	F
D	O	L	K	E	M	U	F	V	T	Z	G
M	L	N	N	T	G	I	V	E	V	P	H
E	P	T	O	S	W	X	P	R	Z	A	I
P	H	Q	R	R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R

Can you find these eight words hidden above?

PRESENT - SANTA - RUDOLPH - TREE
REINDEER - ADVENT - GIVE - RECEIVE



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET CUTS TO HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE IN ABBOTSHAM

The Abbotsham Parish Council was recently advised together with all other Rural parishes that as a result of central government budget cuts they were having to reduce substantially the work carried out by the Devon Highways neighborhood teams and Parish Lengthsmen.

Your Parish Council have been advised that this decision will obviously have a major impact on our local environment and the Devon County Council solution is for us to appoint a formal Community Road Warden, who after training by DCC supervise other volunteers to carry out the following work in Abbotsham Parish, the cost of which would have to be paid for by your parish council:

- Maintain and restock grit bins and carry out gritting of roads.
- Spray and pull weeds, vegetation and keep clear highways and pavements.
- Ensure drains, culverts and gullies from fields and in roads are kept clear.
- Cut grass on all visibility areas and on verges.
- Clean signs and finger posts.

In view of this decision an Open Parish meeting was held at the Abbotsham Village Hall on Saturday 29 November to advise the parish residents of the situation and to consider the following options:

- Find a volunteer Community Road Warden for Abbotsham Parish who is prepared to be trained.
- Do nothing and let grass/ weeds grow, have no road/lane gritting and allow drains/gullies to overflow and cause flooding.
- Operate a local voluntary system with contracting at Parish expense for grass cutting.

A powerpoint presentation was made by Parish Councillors Hugh Bone Chairman, Martin Wilson Vice Chair and Phillip Marlow.

After considerable discussion and the unfair request for a voluntary solution bearing in mind that we will still be asked to pay our Council Tax, volunteers were asked for in regard to the Road Warden. No resident or Parish Councillor was prepared to put their name forward.

The Do-Nothing option was rejected as this was not an acceptable option. It was agreed therefore to adopt the Local Voluntary option.

It was pointed out that providing that this could be carried out and not prevented by DCC it would mean that grants presently made from your parish council precept would have to be used for our parish highway maintenance.

It was agreed that all residents and landowners would be asked to keep clean their own frontage/ drains etc and that where possible we should co-operate with other parishes in regard to lengthsman/contractors.

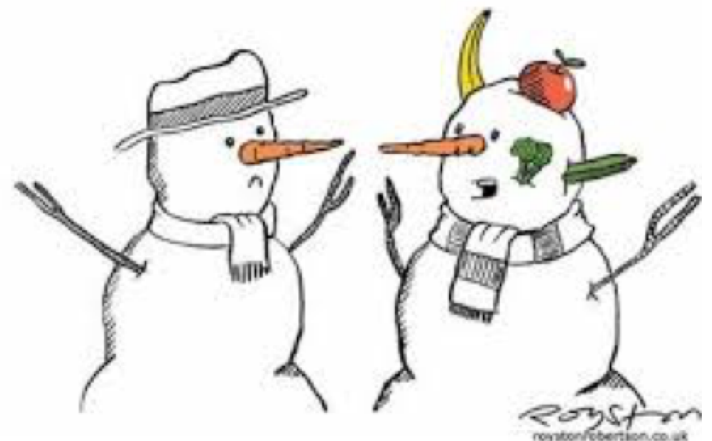
Of course many questions were still unanswered such as;

Will the residents of cities and towns be asked to carry out highway maintenance or are the Rural Parishes bearing the brunt of cuts?

With less work have DCC cut down on their headcount and reduced pension top ups etc?

Will the Council Tax for Rural Parishes be reduced to a lower level than cities and towns?

Hugh M Bone
Chairman, Abbotsham Parish Council



"I'm making sure I get my five daily portions."